



# COACHES

## SPORTS SAFETY TIPS

## **Warm Up and Stretch Before Games and Practices**

Make sure there is time set aside before every practice and game for athletes to warm up properly.

Stretching before practice and games can release muscle tension and help prevent sports-related injuries, such as muscle tears or sprains.

Kids should start with about 10 minutes of jogging or any light activity, and then stretch all major muscle groups, holding each stretch for 20 to 30 seconds

## **Wear Appropriate Sports Gear**

Use appropriate and properly-fitted sports gear to prevent or reduce the severity of injuries.

Make sure athletes use the correct equipment in order to participate in both practices and games. This may include mouth guards, sports cups and shoes with rubber cleats and sunscreen.

## Make Rest a Priority

To help avoid overuse injury, athletes should take breaks during practices and games.

Encourage athletes to tell coaches, parents or another adult about any pain, injury, or illness they may have during or after any practices or games.

Athletes should take at least one or two days off each week from any particular sport.

## Remember to Hydrate

Learn the signs and symptoms of dehydration and other forms of heat illness. (Symptoms range from muscle cramping in the calves, back, arms or abdomen (heat cramps) to faintness or dizziness, nausea and rapid heartbeat (heat exhaustion) to collapse, emotional instability and very high body temperature (heatstroke).

Have your kids bring a water bottle to practice and games. Encourage children to stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of water before, during and after play.

Encourage your athletes to drink fluids (water is the best option) 30 minutes before the activity begins and every 15-20 minutes during activity.

If you're a coach, mandatory fluid breaks during practice and games are a great idea – don't wait for your athletes to tell you they're thirsty.

Bring a water bottle to practice and games. Encourage children to stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of water before, during and after play.

## **Don't Take Chances with the Brain: Know the Signs and Symptoms of Concussions**

- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion. This information is important for coaches, parents and athletes.
- An athlete with a suspected concussion must be removed from play until evaluated and cleared by a medical professional.

● **A good rule of thumb: when in doubt, sit them out.**

### **RECOGNIZING A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION**

To help recognize a concussion, watch for or ask others to report the following two things among your athletes:

- A forceful bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.
- Any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning, or any other signs or symptoms of concussion.

### **SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF**

- Appears dazed or stunned (such as glassy eyes)

- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction or play
- Is unsure of score or opponent
- Moves clumsily or poor balance
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

### **SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE**

• Headache or “pressure” in head • Nausea or vomiting

• Balance problems or dizziness • Double or blurry vision

Sensitivity to light or noise

• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy

• Concentration or memory problems

• Confusion

• Feeling more emotional, nervous, or anxious •

Does not “feel right” or is “feeling down”

**A good rule of thumb: when in doubt, sit them out.**